California Department of Fish and Game Climate Change Program Annual Update 2009

National Level Activities and Involvement

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)

The Department has continued to work closely with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies on the climate change committee, climate change think tank, and a national working group for creating a guidance document for how states can integrate climate change into their wildlife action plans. Past Director Don Koch was a participant with AFWA and the USFWS on a discussion about the creation of a national strategy for climate change. Acting Director McCamman will continue to fill this role. The Department continues to serve on several national and regional climate change working groups and committees.

• National Fish and Wildlife Adaptation Strategy

The DFG supports national coordination-collaboration on climate change and is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a national climate change adaptation strategy.

• Council on Environmental Quality /General Accounting Office (GAO)

DFG participated in a survey on climate change adaptation activities at the request of the GAO. The final report was recently released recommending that the Federal Agencies begin working on a national climate change strategy. In response the White House Office Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) held a listening session on November 16th in which DFG was asked to participate.

State Level Activities and Involvement

• California Climate Adaptation Strategy

The California Natural Resources Agency spearheaded the creation and release of a climate change adaptation strategy for California as part of an Executive Order from the Governor directing the state to prepare for sea level rise and begin climate change adaptation planning (November 2008). The comprehensive, multi-sector climate change adaptation strategy is the first of its kind. CDFG and State Parks co-lead the Biodiversity and Habitat Sector and relied heavily on input from DFG workshops, public meetings, and stakeholder input. A 45 day public comment period solicited 25 comment letters, and all comments were reviewed and suggestions incorporated as appropriate. The Governor's Office released the final strategy in late fall of 2009. This document will be also be integrated into California's Wildlife Action Plan (Plan) as part of the Department's commitment to updating the Plan to more comprehensively cover climate change adaptation planning.

• State Wildlife Action Plan revision

The climate change program worked closely with the wildlife program to submit a proposal for SWG funding to revise and update the Wildlife Action Plan to include a more thorough assessment of climate change impacts and planning. In addition, we are looking into conducting a climate change vulnerability assessment as part of this effort.

• California Climate Action Team

In early 2009, the Department became a member of California's Climate Action Team (CAT). The CAT is a special task force formed to develop a strategy for the state to meet greenhouse gas emission-reduction goals and engage in climate change adaptation planning. In addition, the Department is participating on several of the CAT subgroups that focus on different sector issues (forestry, public health, water, etc) to ensure that ecosystem and species conservation is a consideration in the development and implementation of climate change adaptation strategies outside of the Department's purview. Past Director Koch was a member of the CAT, and Acting Director McCamman will continue to sit on this team to oversee climate change activities across state agencies.

 In November, the CAT requested that DFG provide a proposal for how biodiversity issues should be handled within the CAT structure at a meeting scheduled for December 3rd. A separate proposal for the Director's consideration is under review.

• Bay Area Ecosystem Climate Change Consortium (BAECCC)

The Department became a member of a recently formed group called the "Bay Area Ecosystems Climate Change Consortium". This group is comprised of federal, state, and NGO partners looking to create a demonstration project in the Bay Area for large scale climate change adaptation activities. The DFG was part of the first planning meeting in May.

Regional Level Activities and Involvement

• Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

The Department initiated and is leading the climate change committee for the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). The first meeting was held on July 12th in Newport Beach. The committee is co-chaired by Director Mayer (NV). WAFWA is the first regional association to have a climate change committee and other regional associations are following. This newly formed committee already has several products related to the committee's activities, and a proposal is currently being put forth to put together a working group to provide guidance to WAFWA members on the required elements of a state adaptation strategy to prepare member states for possible federal climate change legislation.

Internal Climate Change Activities

• Going Green

On October 30th a Director's Bulletin was sent out to all staff regarding the completion of a guidance document to help the Department reduce its carbon footprint and save the Department valuable resources http://dfg.ca.gov/climatechange/activities.html. The document details actions that the Department could take to create a more environmentally friendly way of doing business. Following the release, a steady response from staff indicates that they would like to see more guidance from Headquarters and leadership on how to start tackling some of these efforts.

o Acting Director McCamman is considering putting together a voluntary team to come up with an implementation strategy and identify and recognize those actions we are

- already implementing. The climate change committee in Region 1 is willing to take on this challenge and institute a pilot project for a paperless office.
- o The Department is also a member of the Climate Action Registry and has been submitting emissions information into the database on time for the 2nd year in a row. Having this information will be an important baseline that we can measure the success of and initiatives that result from the DFG Going Green effort.

• DFG Adaptation Strategy

DFG's internal climate change adaptation strategy "Confronting Climate Change: Adaptation Actions to Conserve California's Natural Resources" is nearing completion. The strategy contains many of the same elements as the CAS but goes even further to identify the steps necessary for implementing the actions and the staff and funding requirements. The strategy also identifies the existing tools the Department will rely on to deliver actions on the ground and will be an important communication tool as well as a vision for actions needed to help species persist in a changing climate.,

• Region 1 Climate Change Committee

In early 2009, DFG employees in Region 1 initiated the formation of the first DFG Climate Change Regional Committee. This group now has 15 members and was formed to assist DFG Region 1 staff in better understanding and managing the numerous issues associated with climate change in their personal and professional lives. The group has taken on a variety of issues that will assist the Department in the process of integrating climate change into the Department's activities.

• Elkhorn Slough project

In 2009, Elkhorn Slouch received almost \$4M for the restoration of 450 acres in the Parsons Slough wetland complex that will boost ecosystem resilience to climate change by increasing the retention of sediment, critical to keeping pace with sea level rise.

Federal Legislation

• Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act

On November 5, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee reported out the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (S. 1733, CEJAPA) CEJAPA will now move to the Senate floor, however, a vote is not expected this year. Importantly, the bill was passed with no amendments so the allocation for natural resources adaptation stayed as presented.

• Natural Resources Climate Adaptation Act

Introduced by Senators Bingham (NM), Whitehouse (RI), and Baucus (MT) for the creation of a federal national climate change adaptation strategy and the funding to do it.

Funding Opportunities

• American Clean Energy & Security Act 2009 (H.R. 2454)

This bill establishes national policy to better safeguard natural resources from climate change. It provides one percent of revenues from a cap-and-trade system to domestic natural

resource adaptation over the next 10 years and increases the allocation to four percent by 2027. Of that initial 1% the State Fish and Game Agencies are slated to receive 32.5%. Funds to state Fish and Game agencies will be apportioned according to the Pittman-Robertson (WCRP) formula. Match requirements are proposed to be relaxed and proposals range from 75:25 to 90:10 match. Some of the projections for funding that will be available to California ranges from \$9.7M in 2012 to \$71M in 2030. In order to be eligible for this funding the Department will be required to have a **climate change adaptation strategy** approved by the Secretary for the Department of Interior that can be incorporated into the wildlife action plan.

• President's Budget FY2010

The President's budget proposes \$40M for States and Tribes to integrate climate change in State Wildlife Action Plans and in similar tribal plans. The emphasis would be to develop scientific data on climate impacts that occur and those predicted to occur and to translate this scientific input into on-the-ground strategies for land and water managers. The U.S. House of Representatives supported this increase and put it in their version of the appropriations bill and changed the match from 50:50 to 75:25. However the Senate did not correspond with the level of funding nor a change in the match. They provided a \$5M increase. The Senate Interior Appropriations and full Appropriations Committee have already voted in support of this bill. It next goes to the full Senate for a floor vote, likely in early September.

Stimulus funding

One of the ways in which the Department will respond or be proactive in terms of climate change impacts is through the conservation actions we are putting on the ground now and how we communicate these actions and planning efforts to public and policy makers is critical. Many of the projects that the Department submitted for stimulus funding can be considered climate change adaptation actions that are directly related to helping species persist in a rapidly changing climate (reducing existing or new stressors, improving connectivity-removing barriers, etc). The more we can talk about how our actions will help us manage and conserve resources in a changing climate the more successful we will be in attracting additional resources.

Private funding

Organizations such as Doris Duke, Hewlett Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and others are actively funding climate change related projects. Several organizations are specifically funding climate change projects that are tied into the Wildlife Action Plans (WCS, NFWF, and Doris Duke). There are many private organizations that want to use their money towards climate change projects but don't know what to fund. Most groups are not interested in funding monitoring or planning projects but want to fund something that delivers climate change adaptation or mitigation actions on the ground.

Capacity Building and Outreach

• DFG Climate Change website

The Department has a climate change web site with resources for staff as well as an intranet page with information from task force meetings, and grant proposals (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/climatechange/).

• CA Outdoors magazine article

Upcoming CA Outdoors September/October issue will feature a climate change article.

• DFG Climate Change Stakeholders meeting

On going communication with stakeholders (state, federal, NGO, university) is a key component of the climate change program. In addition to regular updates via email, stakeholders are brought together twice a year. On September 3rd, over 60 stakeholders were brought together at the CEC auditorium in Sacramento to discuss existing or new initiatives and look for ways to partner or leverage exiting resources to continue to put actions on the ground as we finalize an adaptation approach. The meeting included presentations from DFG staff on climate change related activities and programs/projects specific to implementing adaptation actions (NCCP, ACE, connectivity planning, etc). A round table discussion with partners on opportunities for collaborative efforts resulted in the creation of 3 working groups that will be meeting December 14-15, 2009. These working groups will focus on outreach, workshops & research, and creating a framework for successfully implementing climate change adaptation strategies across the state.